

Update from the Department of Early Learning April 2009

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

This week, the state House of Representatives and Senate issued their budget proposals. As expected, the proposals reflect the extremely tough economic times our state and nation are facing. No area of government goes untouched, including early learning. We are still looking closely at both proposals, and working to answer questions and provide information as the budget process moves forward.



As you know, there's still a long way to go in this process. Both the House and Senate must pass their budget bills, then meet together to hammer out the differences before they send one budget to the Governor's desk. You can find the House, Senate and Governor's budget proposals on the Legislative Evaluation & Accountability Program Committee's Web site at <http://leap.leg.wa.gov/leap/default.asp>.

Helping ensure the safety and healthy development of children in Washington continues to be our focus and priority even as we face economic difficulties. I've been so impressed with how DEL staff focus every day on behalf of Washington children and families, even as we work to find additional agency efficiencies.

On another note, I want to thank our Deputy Director, Amie Lapp Payne, for her service to Washington over the past few years. Amie is moving with her husband to San Antonio, and her last day at DEL will be April 30. In her time here, she has applied her considerable expertise to help oversee policy and programs, and she's helped forge strong relationships around the state. We all wish her the very best and look forward to seeing what she does next!

As our new director, Dr. Bette Hyde, comes on board on April 15, watch for more information about her plans to get to know the early learning community even better. It's an honor to have served as interim director, and I'm working closely with Bette to help ensure a smooth transition. Welcome, Bette!

—Karen Tvedt, Interim Director

DEL launches online 'DEL En Español' section

To better communicate with Spanish-speaking parents, caregivers and members of the public, DEL has launched a new Spanish section on its Web site. The DEL En Español section is available at www.del.wa.gov by clicking on the "En Español" link, and includes information about:



- Getting licensed as a child care provider.
- How to find help paying for child care or preschool.
- How to contact DEL staff.
- Other resources and Web sites for parents and caregivers.

DEL will continue adding to this section in the coming months. If you have suggestions for resources and information to include on DEL En Español, please e-mail communications@del.wa.gov.

DEL expands its Parent Advisory Group

A core value at the Department of Early Learning (DEL) is that parents are their children's first and most important teachers. To ensure even broader parent representation to guide DEL decision-making, we've expanded our Parent Advisory Group.

The Parent Advisory Group originally was formed in 2002-2003 as the Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP) Parent Advisory Group (when ECEAP was housed in the Washington State Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development). The group had six members representing ECEAP families statewide.

The ECEAP Parent Advisory Group became the DEL Parent Advisory Group in January 2007, and in 2008 DEL sought new members to help ensure parents' voices are heard when we shape our strategies, programs and policies.

There are now 15 members representing rural *and* urban areas of the state and a diversity of life and family experiences. We now have a Tribal Nations representative (from the Nisqually Tribe) as well as parents who are able to share their experiences as members of:

- Past and present ECEAP and Head Start families
- Blended families
- Foster families
- Spanish-speaking families
- Military families
- Families including children with disabilities
- Immigrant families
- Multiracial families
- Families in which grandparents are raising grandchildren
- Families with an incarcerated parent
- Families in which they are a teen parent
- Families that have experienced domestic violence
- Families that have used licensed child care and family, friend and neighbor (FFN) care
- Families that have used Working Connections Child Care (WCCC) subsidies
- Single-parent families

The PAG meets monthly by phone with DEL's Parent Involvement Coordinator and three times a year in person to review DEL materials and policies. We are excited about the voice they have and will continue to bring on behalf of the children and families in Washington!



DEL Parent Advisory Group members (some members are listed by initials only for privacy reasons)

Northeast Washington: Tiffany White, Kevin Hupp, and Jill Bossio

Southeast Washington: Heather Foster

Central Washington: Josie Cera and Bianca Bailey

Northwest Washington: Sandra Klier, Leslie Hill, Todd McNerney, Christianne Martin, and T.J.

Southwest Washington: Joseph Kalama, Rudy Borboa, Amanda Coday, and S.G.

DEL to hold public hearings on draft CCDF plan

Members of the public will have the chance to comment on DEL's draft Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) plan during two public hearings in May. The federal CCDF helps promote accessible, affordable, quality child care around the state. The hearings will be held on:

Monday, May 4

Moses Lake

4 to 7 p.m.

Big Bend Community College

ATEC (Masto) Conference Center

Room 1870 D

Tuesday, May 5

Kent

4 to 7 p.m.

Kent DEL Office

1313 W. Meeker, Tahoma Room

A draft of the plan will be posted on DEL's Web site on April 22 at www.del.wa.gov/government/CCDF/. DEL currently is gathering public input via an online survey (in English and Spanish) about priorities for the draft plan. That survey is available until April 7.

DEL serves as the lead CCDF agency for the state, and must submit a plan every two years describing how the state will spend its federal child care dollars. The funding is used for a variety of initiatives, including to:

- Help low-income families find and pay for child care.
- Fund activities to improve the quality of child care.
- Fund child care resource and referral services for parents and caregivers.
- Provide training for child care providers.

Washington's final federal allocation for CCDF in the past biennium (Federal Fiscal Years 2008 and 2009) was about \$220.5 million.



April 19 to 25 is the Week of the Young Child!

How are you celebrating? Get ideas and information at

www.naeyc.org/about/woyc.

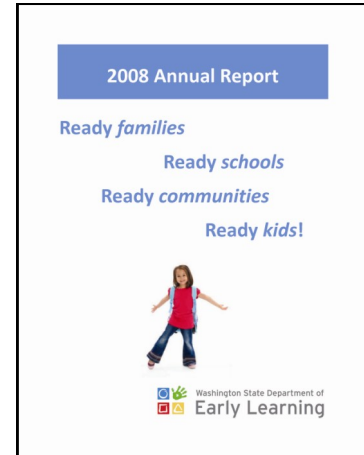
DEL's annual report online now

DEL has issued its 2008 annual report, *Ready Families, Ready Schools, Ready Communities, Ready Kids!*

The report highlights some of our key accomplishments from 2008, including expanding the Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP), enhancing partnerships and improving our child care licensing work.

To save on costs, we are only posting our report online.
Read it now at:

www.del.wa.gov/publications/communications/docs/AnnualReport_2008.pdf



Thrive by Five Washington launches new online blog

Longtime *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* reporter Paul Nyhan is now the blogger for Thrive by Five Washington. The "Birth to Thrive Online" blog launched April 1 on Thrive's Web site:

www.thrivebyfive.org.

Nyhan will blog about early learning trends and research, news and the work of Washington's early learning community. Be sure to check out the blog, and sign up for the RSS feed to have the blog delivered to your e-mail inbox.

New economic stimulus plan information available

DEL has created a new Web page to help explain early learning funding within the federal American Recover and Reinvestment Act of 2009.

The Act includes funding for two key early learning initiatives:

- About \$2 billion nationally for the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) Block Grant, which in our state is administered by DEL.
- \$2.1 billion for the federal Head Start and Early Head Start program. (These funds are provided directly by the federal government to local Head Start agencies.)

Federal guidelines on use of the CCDF funds are expected in the coming weeks. More information is available at www.del.wa.gov/government/recovery.

